

28)

leopard are used as dance ornaments
by the intore pages.

224 the otter (inzibyi or igihura), the marsh antelope (mpala), the
[643] "bush bock" (inzole), the lion, and the leopard, as well as ivory
tusks.

[622] If a wild beast such as a lion or leopard has been killed,
its skin must be turned over to the chief who in exchange gives the
hunters a sterile cow as ingororano (2).

2. Cf. Property, Ownership of Cattle,
p. 48.

224 When the hill chief hunts with his people, he keeps some of
622 the skins and gives the others to the provincial chief, who in turn
643 keeps some of them and, if he considers it advantageous to himself,
sends the others to the Mwami. If the hill chief has killed a lion
or a leopard, the skin must be turned over to the Mwami. If there
are two skins they are divided between the king and the provincial
chief. The [45] hill chief may keep a leopardskin only if the hunt
has been particularly fruitful.

224 The native who has killed three elephants has the sole right
to the tusks of the third animal killed.

224 Finally, a hunter is forbidden to take any part of a crocodile
825 he has killed. The animal with its paws loaded with stones must be
thrown to the bottom of the river, for the Banyarwanda believe that
the body of the saurian contains a violent poison and they want to
prevent its being used.

224 When an animal is pointed out, the beaters who have gone
forward into the thickets where they are almost invisible and the
hunters who have followed them must indicate their presence by a
low whistle. Hunting accidents are regulated by customary law (1).

1. Cf. Penal Law, p. 98.

278

believe that this potion will kill whoever does not speak the truth or reveals a state secret (cf. also Procedure, pp. 104 and 105).

766 dared reveal what he had seen.

The summit of Rutare Hill is crowned with trees, [96] the remains of an ancient forest. The cemetery of the kings and queens can be found there. The abanyamugogo build a hut there, dig a grave, and bury the king and his weapons in it. The hut is closed with beams and surrounded by a thorny enclosure to keep wild animals out. Quite near-by, the watchers build themselves dwellings [767] where they live for two years and are fed during this time by the people of the neighborhood. Then they return home after going through Nyanza where they are showered with gifts. But the Mwami may not see them for he would die during the year if he caught sight of those who have watched over and carried his father's body. For the same reason the abiru who have accompanied them to Rutare may never return to the court of Nyanza. The belief also exists that from [825] the right shoulder of the dead Mwami there issues a worm (urunyo) which, if placed in a pitcher of milk, will grow and become a leopard that kills only those who are wicked and unjust.

When the Mwami dies all work stops for eight days. For two months the bulls are removed from the herds and the king's children may not have any marital relations. Although they are under no obligation to do so, the Banyarwanda behave in the same way.

The death of the Umugabekazi [king's mother] calls for the same ceremonies and the same interdictions, but they are somewhat simplified.

9. Succession to the Throne

643

The king of Ruanda always belongs to the family of the [644] Abanyiginya. His wives (1) are mostly chosen from the clans of the

[644]

1. The king may have four legitimate wives whose children are the only ones who, in theory, can succeed him; he can have as many concubines as he wishes.

Abega and the Abakono.

439 from Urundi and Ruanda are sold in Usumbura and Bukoba for export since there is a heavy demand for them. The hides are almost without exception from animals that died, either useless steers or sterile cows, which for this reason are now killed in much greater numbers than before. Since for reasons mentioned above other cattle are seldom slaughtered, the export of hides will remain quite restricted in the future.

One of the "superstitious" customs connected with cattle farming whose practical basis and meaning cannot be dis-
825 covered any more is that the Murundi may never heat or even boil milk. If he did so, the cow from whom the milk had been taken would get a sore udder or she would even stop giving milk altogether. It is also believed that the cow would develop sores on her udder if the Murundi ate peas or peanuts on the day he drank milk. This taboo evidently also has dietetic reasons. On the other hand, it is difficult to understand why someone
752 with a wound on his leg or on some other part of his body is not permitted to look on while a cow is calving; it is assumed that his wounds would then grow even larger (No. 19, p. 423).

It is certain that the Barundi have taken over the belief
231 imported by the Batussi that especially close connections exist
776 between cattle and the chief deity, Imana. All cattle are dedicated to Imana and are believed to be creatures "possessed" by Imana. Instead of Imana, Riangombe is also often mentioned. On the other hand it is reported that even the "devil," or Rikiranga, the most important of the evil spirits (see p. 121), is the owner of a cattle herd in the vicinity of Mujaga which includes two steers dedicated to him (Afrikabote [African Messenger], 1904, p. 123). Yet the precise extent of these religious beliefs regarding cattle is quite unknown. Finally,
576 we might mention that during the involved greetings of the
231 Barundi the phrase, "ischo-scho-amascho," that is, "cattle,
[772] cattle herd," is repeated. Van der Burgt considers this typical herdsman's greeting a kind of supplication to the main god, Imana, to grant the person greeted all kinds of good fortune which is epitomized precisely by cattle (No. 19, p. 530). In van der Burgt's opinion all salutations of the Barundi are of

778 Usige, these little huts are constructed so as to have two en-
 346 trances, the pot inside has two spouts, the ritual tobacco pipe
 [782] has two bowls; all this is probably because they are supposed to
 serve both the spirit of the ancestor and his wife (see Fig. 11).
 Van der Burgt interprets this custom as being related to the
 supposed bisexuality of the manes (No. 19, p. 564), yet I
 could not find any proof of this.

[769] The Murundi is rarely satisfied with only one ikigabiro;
 usually there are three or four of them dedicated to the spirits
 of the three or four deceased family members who were
 closest to him. At one time I actually counted no less than
 eight such sacrificial huts in one kraal.

778 The huts are consecrated by the kiranga performing the
 ceremony of the sacred spear. While the ceremony is in
 782 progress, the family members eat several kinds of food next
 796 to the little "votive chapel." This is done in honor of the an-
 769 cestor to whom the hut is dedicated. They deposit a small
 amount of each dish and a little beer in the ikigabiro. Later
 this offering will be repeated each time that the ceremony of
 the sacred spear is celebrated for some reason or other by the
 family concerned. Not only millet gruel and pombe beer are
 offered; among prosperous families the sacrifice also includes
 the meat of chickens, goats, rams, and even beef.

769 According to the belief of the Barundi, the ancestral
 spirit either chooses to make the hut erected in his honor his
 782 permanent residence or at least he uses it as his temporary
 778 quarters in which case he will then appear as a ghost in the
 775 neighborhood. The Murundi believe that the food offerings
 are eaten by the spirit when in reality they have been eaten by
 dogs, rats, or birds. If the food remains untouched, the
 Murundi finds comfort in the thought that the incorporeal spirit
 has enjoyed only the incorporeal parts of the food, beer, and
 tobacco.

778 According to van der Burgt, there exists, in addition to
 769 the two cult sites mentioned above, a third type which, however,
 825 appears to be extremely rare. These are closed huts, two to
 775 three meters high, found in the neighborhood of the sacred
 groves close to the old royal kraals. The one seen by van der

778 Burgt was dedicated to the manes of King Ntare (No. 19,
769 p. 565) and allegedly was the residence of a large python which
●825 was the receptacle of the spirit of the dead king. The snake
775 was protected and fed by its special guards. In Ruanda and
Kisiba I personally heard of such official sacred monuments.
They also were inhabited by a large snake which was regarded
as the vehicle of the king's soul and which was regularly fed
with milk by the priest. (Cf. also No. 31, pp. 107, 130.)
[137] As a rule, however, no such consecrated huts are found
in the sacred groves.

778 The sacred grove (imana, iteka, intatemwa) as such is
regarded as an object of deepest devotion by the Murundi
(No. 19, p. 77). There are no woods in most of Urundi, and
hardly any trees exist in Ruanda. Consequently, the small groups
of tall fig trees towering above the ridges of hills here and
there are a very characteristic feature of the scenery (Plate 29a).
Everywhere they indicate the site where at one time stood the
residence, the kraal (lugo, urugo), of a king or chief and where
the former master himself is probably buried. After the death
of the owner, his homestead is abandoned, the huts fall to
pieces, and only the fig trees that formed the fence of the kraal
continue to grow unhindered; from that time on, nobody may
[784] touch them or even cut them down. Like the onetime place of
residence, these trees are regarded as sinister and sacred
(imana, taboo). It is not simply pious feeling for the deceased
which protects these trees of his former dwelling, for such gentle
feelings are unknown to the Murundi. It is rather fear of the
wrath of the spirits of the dead from whose graves the trees may
have grown. This sentiment prevents the people from using the
[825] trees for much needed fuel. All kinds of animals live in the thicket,
[775] among them the snake which the spirit of the deceased has chosen
as his new residence. Sometimes the priest of the district offers
a sacrifice to the spirit by depositing food and milk for the snake.
532 The Barundi do not have any reproductions of their spirits,
776 demons and gods in the form of sculptured or carved figures or
as drawings. This should not be regarded as proof of their lack

532 of artistic creativity which is also typical of all their other
776 cultufal possessions. The same is also true of most other
East Africans. The Barundi represent their imaginary spirits
only in their dances (see p. 127). They decorate them with
certain symbolic emblems and pay homage to them, motivated
[781] by a mixture of fear and calculation.

Finally, religious concepts and emotions are also re-
784 flected in many "superstitious" customs with which the life of
262 the Barundi abounds. Most of these customs are designed to
repel evil spirits. Those which deal with diet, care of the body,
etc., frequently seem to the European observer to be hygienic
precautions. There are many rules and taboos (umusiro) per-
taining to food. As has been mentioned above, all Barundi
may eat beef, although it is quite a rare treat for them
(p. 46). Only the Batwa eat goat meat; a Muhutu will eat it
only in rare cases. Nobody, however, is permitted to eat
chicken meat, venison, or the flesh of numerous other animals
which for various reasons are considered impure. Also, there are
the food taboos on the totem animals of the different clans (p.
103). Few people eat mutton, and only the tribes living on
Lake Tanganyika eat fish. Blacksmiths must abstain from eat-
ing pork (No. 23, 1914, pp. 111 ff.). Incidentally, no woman
[843] may watch a blacksmith at work. A pregnant Murundi wife
is not permitted to eat meat, beans, sweet potatoes, beer, or
salt; she may only eat boiled manioc, hot maize gruel, ripe
bananas, and peanuts. However, a pregnant Mutwa woman
may eat and drink as usual. Nobody may warm or boil milk
since otherwise the cows would become sick. Likewise, a per-
son who has eaten peanuts or peas may [138] not drink milk
on the same day since the cows would become sick. Nobody
may eat vegetables and milk at the same time since this would
harm the cows which gave the milk. The Banjaruanda,
Banjankole, Banjampororó, and Banjoro have the same super-
stitions (No. 30, Vol. II, pp. 514, 534; No. 19, p. 6). In
[765] Urundi, after the father of a family has died, his widow and
children do not eat salt until the period of mourning has
passed, and they do not cut their hair.

- 564 ¹⁶⁶ Three socio-racial castes are to be distinguished among its peoples: pastoralist Batutsi¹ (about 10 per cent. of the population), agriculturalist Bahutu (about 85 per cent.), and Batwa, 563 hunters and potters (about 5 per cent.). 162

Man and the Material World

- 773 The world in which men are placed and which they know through their senses was created *ex nihilo* by *Imana*. The Ruanda word *kurema* means to 776 produce, to make. It is here rendered 'to create' because our informants say that there was nothing before *Imana* made the world. This belief concerning the origin of the material world is universal and clear. To any question on this point, the answer is ready.

- 772 The Banyarwanda assert that we do not see the whole of the material world which was created at that time. The world of our experience is flat; 823 its limits are far away and made of fences like the ones we see around kraals. On these fences there is a big rock which is the sky we see. Beyond the rock there is another world (*ijuru*) similar to our own, with hills, trees, and rivers. This world may be said to be heavenly only in the sense that it is above the sky: it is not a paradise but rather a richer duplicate of our world. Under the soil on which we tread there is yet another world (*ikuzimu*) also conceived as similar to our own. There is nothing infernal about it. The material universe is thus a kind of three-storied construction. It is not impossible to go from one floor to another: some people and animals came from the world above to the intermediate world and, according to some legends, one man at least went to the lower world.

- 821 In our world the moon and the stars (which are kinds of glow-worms) stay high up in the sky. The sun rises in the morning and in the evening reaches the end of the world where a powerful man kills it and cuts it into pieces. Then he throws the main bone across the vault of heaven to the East where it grows up and the following morning the same process begins again.

- 773 In essentials our world was created as we see it now, but there have been some changes in the course of its history. Some hills were raised up by the 823 kings of Ruanda; the formation of Kivu Lake is accounted for in different folk-tales. Cattle, which rank so high in the Ruanda scale of values, also made a special appearance on the intermediate world. The stories give more than one version of their origin but they agree on their arrival in a world already constituted and inhabited by men. According to some tales, creatures did not originally have the same bodily form as they have now. It is 825 said, for instance, that horns were given to animals after they had been created.

- 772 This, and a belief that the world is now slowly degenerating, getting old (people's stature is decreasing, cows give less milk), suggest that the Ruanda conception of the universe is not a wholly static one. The world does not remain the same, it is in process of evolution. However, when direct

¹ In this paper, following the common use, we have kept the prefixes of the Ruanda words, such as *mu* for the singular and *ba* for the plural.

/21/ A Hamite Kingdom in the Center of Africa

Book I

A Summary Outline of Ruanda and Its Inhabitants

Chapter 1

Physical and Ethnological Make-up of Ruanda.

Political, Familial, and Social Organization of Its Inhabitants.

[3] Ruanda is bound to the north by the Protectorate of Uganda which encloses the Bufumbiro, separated from Ruanda in 1912 by the Anglo-Belgian Commission of Delimitation. /22/

To the northeast it is bound by the Kagera, which runs into Lake Victoria.

The Akanyaru River, which delimits Ruanda to the south and southeast does not enclose the Bugessera. That province, situated at the angle formed by the junction of the Akanyaru and the Kagera, was separated from Urundi, to which it used to belong. It is now divided from it by an artificial line. Nor is the Bungwe enclosed by the southern river, which leaves it to the right.

To the west, Ruanda is separated from the Belgian Congo by Lake Kivu along a length of 120 kilometers. To the northwest the volcanic chain forms a natural boundary beyond which are situated, however, two small provinces, the Bgisha, or Gisigari, and the Jomba, which were joined to Belgian Kivu in 1912.

Such are the approximate boundaries of Ruanda. This does not prevent its inhabitants from extending their contacts well beyond the circle of their own land. They go as far as Lake Edward to fetch salt, which is collected in the marshes near the lake. There they also

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[317]

● [825]

484 purchase the skins of black and white colobus /monkeys/ (inkomo) which
● 825 are used to make the court outfit (inkindi) so dear to the court pages
(intore).

648 For a long time the Hamites of Ruanda maintained good neighborly relations with the more humble kings of the Karagwe and Uswi, with whom they exchanged courtesies.

The same did not apply to Urundi, which forms the southern and southeastern border of Ruanda. In spite of their common origins and language, the two lands were frequently at war. Urundi, however, often served as an asylum for people banished from Ruanda.

439 The Banyarwanda /Banyaruanda/ never stopped trading with the Congo tribes, who supplied them with hoes and rings of vegetable
[30] fiber /23/ called ubutega which are worn by the women around their legs as ornaments (1).

1. Whether black women dress sumptuously or niggardly, they all show a great love of ornaments (Maurice Delafosse).

This fiber is taken from a small tree (intunda) which grows only in Masisi territory. Its purchase gives rise to constant comings and goings between that territory and Ruanda. The bark of yet another plant called isiha is used to make rings of lesser quality which are not as much in demand.

436 Butega are looked upon as ornaments and riches, and they are
651 used as currency. The Banyarwanda, lake-shore dwellers and neighbors of Masisi, were assessed in butega as taxpayers. Every year each clan had to supply several thousand to the queen mother, who used them for herself, her /female/ attendants, and her slaves.

301 It is not unusual to meet Batutsi ladies wearing hundreds of
[48] rings around their legs. These ornaments are piled on each other up to the knees, and lend their wearers a slow and very ungraceful gait.

[55] A wealthy woman's wardrobe includes several thousand butega.
[69] Their purchase occasions indebtedness which frequently gives rise to lengthy lawsuits and disputes.

224 inkezi, and monkeys (1), whose flesh they eat. This¹ makes them

• [825]

1. Only the chimpanzee (impndu) and the gorilla (ingagi) escape the cooking pot because, as the Pygmies say with a shade of malice, "they were formerly our peers (ngo n'abatwa bachu) and only with time have they degenerated and turned into animals (ngo zahinduts' inyamaswa)!"

[783]

[411] most "impure" in the eyes of the others. They handle bows and wooden arrows with great skill. Although they are always on the watch for game, they cannot derive all their subsistence from it. The plants and wild roots of the forest are not sufficient either. In former times, [574] they used to hold for ransom those travelers who had the temerity to cross their domain, and they raided the Bahutu fields. Now that 463 European authorities have put an end to these acts of pillage, they have found new sources of revenues in the making of ropes, baskets, and bows, which they sell in the villages or take to market. One may no longer say of the Negrillos of Ruanda that they are still at the "gathering stage." They have been beyond it for an indeterminate period of time.

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The great Batutsi chiefs like to have a few Batwa around them and use them chiefly as litter bearers. Many of them live at the capital where they are used in various capacities as guards and watchmen. Executioners are recruited among them. They like to exercise this function, for they keep the victims' remains.

It must be added that they showed unequalled cruelty in the exercise of this horrible function. The screams of the victims aroused no pity in them. European penetration has fortunately put an end to this dismal vocation.

224

[342]

The Negrillos live in very primitive huts made of branches, /36/ which do not provide complete protection against the inclemency of the seasons or wild animals. The latter do not usually arouse much fear in them, since they are familiar with their habits and lairs.

¹[i.e., the eating of various meats by the Batwa. -Aug/54]

neolithic people made a bread or rather a cake, some interesting specimens of which have been preserved in the waters of Swiss lakes....

"They are round biscuits, probably prepared without yeast with coarse flour...." (3) The bread made of sorghum flour that the

3. Joseph Déchelette, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

Blacks bake is similar to those biscuits and of the same shape. /60/

Who can fail to see that all these analogies, resemblances, and ethnological similarities open to the mind a vast realm of conjecture, especially if one accepts the idea that Africa is the cradle of the Aurignacian civilization (1)?

1. It is enough to wander through the galleries of a museum of comparative ethnography, Déchelette adds, to find that the initial stage of civilization among all peoples of the earth presents in every case, if not a uniform appearance, at least many identical fundamental traits. Everywhere the same industry corresponds to the same cultural phase. (*Op. cit.* p. 313.

614
● 825 Totemism is not highly prized in Ruanda. Perhaps it is nothing more than a vestige from the past. The totem is always an animal. That of the king is a leopard, the crowned crane is that of the Banyiginya, and the frog that of the Bega. Among the Bahutu, the Bagessera have the wagtail (inyamanza) as their totem, the Babanda have the hyena (impyisi), the Basinga the sparrow hawk (sakabaka), etc. The totem is a member of the clan and is respected as such by the other members.

In the past it happened sometimes that the clan took up arms to avenge the death of its totem, deliberately or accidentally killed by one of the members of a neighboring tribe. The members of certain tribes, the Bapyisi, for example, are said to communicate

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825 with their totems or even with other animals, to render them harmless or to excite them against their enemies.

This, however, is a belief that will soon disappear, for the Banyarwanda take small notice of their totems nowadays.

538 As far as oral literature and folklore in general are concerned, one may assert without risk of error that the Banyarwanda have no reason to envy the neighboring peoples.

There may be few Black groups who managed to preserve so many and such ancient traditions, made all the more precious by the fact that they help us understand more than one facet of their history. This will be shown readily /61/ in the course of this work. We believe that the Hamites, who are given to the things of the mind and have organized the country methodically, must be justly regarded as the chief authors of this literary development.

181 The Bahutu of Ruanda owe to these same Batutsi the appreciable advantage of being less backward, less "primitive" than many of their fellow Bantu of Central Africa. Because they were less isolated than most of the members of the tiny neighboring states at the time of European penetration, the Banyarwanda found themselves in a situation more favorable to the progress of civilization thanks to the centralization of the Hamitic state.

171 The inhabitants of Ruanda, as we have just pointed out, have more than one trait in common with the other African tribes. In speaking on the subject, Maurice Delafosse provides the following explanation, "The African Negro peoples, as different from one another as they may seem to a superficial observer, have a unified character which may be attributed to their common ethnic origins and to the relative similarity of the physical, economic, and social environments where they first developed and where they later evolved."
(1)

1. Les Civilisations négro-
africaines /Negro African
Civilizations/.

157 As for the reader who wishes to know what to think of the Blacks, we must answer in all sincerity that it is very difficult to

794 and Mulengetwe, old historical figures who may have been notorious.

776 4. The "Munyoro" figure was invented for the same superstitious reasons which cause the Blacks to honor the spirits of the dead and more particularly the souls of those who distinguished themselves for good or for evil in the course of their mortal existence.

The figure of Munyoro was probably included in the ceremonies after the defeat of the Banyoro.

5. The inhabitants of the Nkombo isles render special worship to Muhima and Nyirangenge.

Muhima, a synonym for Mututsi, symbolizes the Batutsi conquerors who seized the isles, and Nyirangenge, a feminine figure, stands for the Batutsi ladies or personifies the intelligence of the Hamites.

6. Nyarwambari, son of Mulema and grandson /367/ of Ngwegwe, figures among Ryangombe's followers. The initiates do not have much to say about him.

7. Bukiranzuki figures among the daughters of the founder. During the ceremonies, the women who worship her wear on their heads the tail of an animal known under the name of igiharangu.

The members of this religious pantheon are numerous. They include, aside from the afore-mentioned figures, the founder's father and grandfather, Babinga and Nyundo; his wives, Kajumba, mother of Binego, Karyango, mother of Bukiranzuki, and Gachubya, mother of Nyabirungu; Nyirakabali, his daughter, whom he gave in marriage to one of his companions; and Lubindankima ("the man who girds his loins with a monkey pelt"). The inhabitants of the Bugoyi have it that this latter figure, who was probably invented out of whole cloth, was the friend and confidant of one of Ruganzu II's great victims, the famous Gatabirora, nicknamed Bilikunkomo, whose actions and deeds have been dramatized and romanticized (1).

1. Cf. Book III /not translated/.

In the meetings of the initiates there is also mention of

[825] Gassankomo, "the man who wraps himself in colobus pelts." This is the honorific name given to Kagoro, whose impersonator must for some

794 reason gather myriapods (centipedes) which he must dry in the sun and
 796 then string up and wear as a badge when he goes begging for sorghum
 [625] or banana bunches in the course of ritual processions.

The disciples of Ryangombe also honor the memory of the master's mother, whose role was rather insignificant to judge by the legend.

Ntamutimuchumyi is mentioned only to state that he was the cause of Ryangombe's first misfortunes, for he was about to dishonor him by depriving him of his property and his rights. He was eventually killed for the sake of the general /368/ welfare and honor by Binego, who arrived at the most critical moment. The name of Ntamutimuchunyi /sic/ is synonymous with felony and treachery.

As for Nkonjo, the slave, she personifies cowardice and coarseness. She is mentioned only with scorn (1).

1. Cf. Book V, "The Legend of Ryangombe, " /not translated/.

714 To designate the master's hunting dogs, initiates avail them-
 552 selves of appellations and epithets replete with allusions. Some of them recall the abilities of these animals, others the qualities and defects of human beings. The names of the following animals are readily mentioned:

1. "The (serious) man who never laughs at his fellowman " (Ntamugab' usek' undi).
2. "He who preserves (as a careful owner) a store of smoked meat" (Nyamubikan' umuranz' uruguma).
3. "He who pays the bride price for a girl whose family did not raise her properly" (Bakoska batahana).
4. "The pot-herb which is so odorous, although it is not yet ripe, that it causes people to eat up (at one blow) all the butter in the house" (Urunyegeri rutoto).
5. "Her mother knows her well (including all her faults), so she will make no effort to argue with her because she knows that her daughter is incorrigible" (Nyina aramuzi, ntazamumpora).

791 /practitioners/ of this kind demand rather high fees /401/ and will
789 accept no less than a goat, an ox, or even a heifer as the price of
their services.

[825] 3. In the Gissaka people believe that there are tame snakes
guarding the fields and houses of their masters. Those reptiles coil
themselves around the neck of thieves and suffocate them. They
also follow the tracks of thieves and receivers of stolen goods to their
homes.

4. According to popular belief, the batezi (from the verb
gutega, "to lay traps") are capable of uncovering evildoers and thieves
by means of a curious method, which is none other than bewitchment
by analogy /sympathetic magic/. The victim of the theft comes to
the spell caster and presents him with a goat whose throat is immediately
slit. Then the magician takes the bladder, fills it with air, and sus-
pends it with a rope from the ceiling of the hut. If the thief's death
is desired, the sorcerer punctures the bladder or even cuts the rope
that holds it. If the membranous sac collapses on the ground, the
thief cannot fail to die instantly. It will be sufficient to ask for news
in the vicinity. Any sudden death will be interpreted in this light
and ascribed to the act of bewitchment. The belly of the victim
will be greatly inflated. This is what is called gubang' agaheto,
"to string a bow, " as the Banyarwanda sometimes put it when they
wish to allude to this method of bewitching.

If the owner of the stolen object wishes to be magnanimous,
he asks the sorcerer to strike the bladder only lightly, in order to cause
the culprit mere intestinal pains. Needless to say, the Blacks have
complete faith in these magic procedures and believe that they have
witnessed their consequences in a large number of cases.

754 5. Abachuraguzi. This word comes from the word guchuragura
[535] and designates a kind of dance. /402/ The devotees of this kind of
dance stamp up and down on the spot. People in this category are
the true jettatori /from Italian/ whose aim is to cast a spell, jettatura,
on their fellow men because they are jealous of their good fortune
or because they want revenge for an offense, real or fancied. Those
baleful men operate at night. In order to succeed better in their
black designs, the spell casters must wear nothing but an old mat

784 The death of a family member makes the foodstuffs remaining
262 in the hut taboo, as well as the objects and tools which belonged
768 personally to the deceased. These objects may be purified with
lustral water.

784 Even the widower or widow becomes taboo at the death of
768 the spouse and must undergo rites of purification.

833 Cohabitation between spouses becomes taboo upon the death
784 of a close relative, the king, or the queen mother. This remains in
764 effect for a period of time that varies with the importance of the
deceased.

Marital relations are also forbidden in certain circumstances
prescribed by usage or tradition, for example, at the time of a
clandestine marriage proposal (1).

[584]

1. In order to force a girl's parents
to give their daughter in marriage,
an individual need only come into
their hut under some pretext and
covertly leave one of his bracelets
there. After having taken leave of
the household, he cries from afar,
"Take good care of the object I
left behind." The girl's parents
believe that they must give her
to him in order to avert misfortune.

• [825]

In the two preceding cases, the rules demand that the bull,
billy goat, ram, and even the rooster be separated from the family
herds and flocks!

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All field work is forbidden at the time of funerals, as well
as in the following cases: when lightning strikes the courtyard or hut,
when a son is born, when a dog dies, when a hut burns, when it hails.
On such occasions, work is forbidden only for one day.

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Women and herders may not touch sorghum mush while it
lies on the household spatula (umwuko). If she were to disobey this
injunction, a woman would risk bearing only daughters. As for the

784 keeper or owner of a herd, his property would also suffer from this infraction of custom (2). /411/

2. His cows would bear only male calves.

A husband may not use this kitchen utensil to beat his wife! He would risk the loss of his life.

The failure to observe most of the prescribed customs while celebrating a wedding would make the parents of the two partners liable to illness or death.

[551] When asked what their name is, children, young men, and girls either do not answer or give a false name, for fear that the stranger may cast an evil spell upon them and thus prevent them from growing.

[841] A woman in her menses may not enter a hut where there is a newborn child, lest she cause the baby to contract scabies. Hence the custom of placing a copper-thread bracelet (urunyaerere, or urwinjiri) about the neck of babies as a talisman and preventive.

[643] The king must never bend his knees, in order not to expose his kingdom to becoming smaller.

A father may not step over the hide that serves as a portable cradle (ingobyi) for his child, nor may a son step over his mother's belt.

A woman may not step over a spear, milk a cow, repair the roof of a hut, imitate (!) the cry of a rooster, etc.

It is forbidden to sit on a food basket.

When it thunders, one may not smoke a pipe when seated on a chair.

No one may rest on a sheepskin, or he will contract scabies (ngo badahumana). There is danger of death involved in carrying a whetting stone (ityazo) into someone else's house.

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777 It is expressly forbidden to kill certain birds and certain reptiles, not only because they are totem but also because they are regarded either as good luck for the land, like the wagtail (inyamanza), or as bad luck, like the scaly anteater, whose dead body might draw great misfortunes upon the territory. /412/

791 This was no doubt how the profession of "protector and defender of the crops" originated. It is now exercised by the bahinza, nearly all of whom are descended from the ancient petty kings subjugated by Ruganzu. They never gave offense to the Hamitic kings, who not only allowed them to remain but even protected them in the thought that they and their subjects might benefit thereby.

The professionals in this category are numerous, but the most renowned among them have been so far those from Lubengera in the Bgishaza and those from Suti in the Munyambiriri, because they were closer to the central province of Nduga and in continuous contact with the Hamitic court.

Their colleagues from the Kingogo, Bushiru, Buhoma, Bugamba, etc., were not well known outside their own home territory.

791 According to public belief, these masters of occult sciences
825 can place restrictions (kuvuma) upon the birds and insects that ravage the crops. Caterpillars are the most dreaded because some of them (ingungu) attack the stems of sweet potatoes and destroy every last one of them, while others devour the leaves of trees in the summertime.
/442/

The latter are called bahema. Grasshoppers, weevils, and other worms or insects which attack the crops are no less feared. This is why the natives frequently resort to the bahinza and implore their protection. This protection is purchased with gifts in kind which the chiefs levy themselves on their subjects in order to enlist the intervention of the powerful sorcerers. Some of the bahinza have been known to add rain making to their other functions.

791 One of the sorcerers in this category, called Nyamitwe, who lived on the top of a mountain (Chungeri) in the Bugoyi province, had the idea of excavating a small well, about 1.50 meters deep, in the courtyard fronting his home.

Since the ground was impervious to water, rain water would remain there for varying lengths of time. This enabled the crafty fellow to spread the rumor that he had high powers over the clouds. An ingenious way of bringing grist /Tr.: in French, "water"/ to his mill!

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2. Throughout Ruanda, in principle, a new hut is taken over in the name of a spirit (a dead relative) whose favors are desired.

It is also in his name that one takes a wife (kumulongeror' abazimu).

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[342] This is why these women are called abaterampundu, that is, "those who utter cries of joy."

726 The duties of the aBatchaba are often identical to those of their brothers, the aBasingo, whom they assist in bewitching the enemy with teratological beings who are driven before the hostile army. Like the aBiru they also make drums.

● 825 The totem of the aBagessera is the wagtail, a bird of good omen, which is consequently regarded as a member of the family.
342 Hence the power of the Bagessera to call this bird when needed. At
644 court and throughout the land, there is a custom whereby no one may enter a new hut until the wagtail has made an appearance. The bird must at least flit about or hop on the flattened ground where the hut is to be built or on the hut itself. One may even wait several days if necessary /461/ rather than risk the misfortunes which invariably befall those who do not take this traditional practice into account. At the capital, therefore, the Bagessera are in charge of instigating the appearance of "their relative" (mwene wabo), the congenial bird, whenever a royal building is put up.

To achieve this they take some embers from their home and light a fire before the new hut.

They sit nearby and whistle in a special way to catch the attention of their totem.

825 The wagtail is highly regarded by the Banyarwanda. In story and song it is called "the bird (inyamanza) from the region of Mabera," a once famous village inhabited by the Bagessera (1). It is located

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1. The regard in which the wagtail is held is the subject of a charming tale. The wagtail

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gained a choice position among favorite birds because it once performed a very useful deed. A king whose name has been forgotten was pining for love. His courtiers did not know what to do, in spite of their numerous attempts to provide the monarch with a choice companion. . . .

At about the same time, in a village far from the capital, a man and his wife were raising a girl of great beauty, who was nourished on cow milk. . . . The wagtail, who knew of the king's apathy, came and flitted about the courtyard where the young girl was dressing. The bird seized one of her main garments and flew toward the capital. Surprised, the fair maiden followed the bird, begging it to return her garment. "Do not fear," answered the bird, "I shall return it when we hear the sound of the (capital's) drums." While speaking, the winged messenger dropped some beads, of which he had brought a number. The young girl, who was fond of novelties, bent down and picked them up. Eventually they arrived at court. . . . At first people were surprised at such a miraculous event, but their attention was

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drawn to the beauty of the fair stranger. The king was notified. She was the girl he had been waiting for. As a reward, the wagtail was granted a permanent privilege to its species called ubulenga nzira, which included immunity and a sort of tithe to be levied upon the crops throughout the realm.

near the hill of Lwoga, not far from Nyanza, the present capital.

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The Bagessera regard themselves as the most important Muhutu /Bahutu/ clan, and claim to be the most ancient inhabitants of Ruanda. According to them, they were the first masters of the land. /462/

Bloody Bondage Imposed on Some Families

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The Bakono, Banyabyinshi, and Bakunzi of the Kinyaga were for a long time the victims of this /type of bondage/.

Let us add, however, that the brutality and cruelty characteristic of those inhuman and now suppressed customs had lost some of their primitive harshness in the course of the last two reigns.

1. The expiatory debt to which the Bakono were bound for having fought Ruganzu II had been changed altogether.

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Upon the accession of a new king to the throne, the Bakono had to send one or two of their people to the capital, and so did another clan which had formerly belonged to the Banyabyinshi group, so often mentioned at the beginning of the great king's reign.

At court, instead of having their throats slit as was formerly done, those people were merely sprinkled with lustral water (chalk water) and driven for an instant into the hut of the spirits as though being offered in sacrifice to them. There the matter rested. Other chroniclers state that it was customary to beat them a few times with

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to move it, according to local belief, hail would soon avenge this insult to the sacred tool.

The same legend adds that Kigwa's mother immediately bent over the hole to see what had become of her son. The ornamental headdress (urugore) which she wore broke loose and remained suspended in mid-air.

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It is believed that this ornament (originally made of a large sorghum stalk) was the origin of the moon!....

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10. The pomp that surrounds the king on his journeys. Customs observed on such occasions.

In the course of their journeys through the provinces of the realm, Hamitic princes must, in accordance with a centuries-old tradition, stay whenever possible with the Bagessera.

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It will be recalled that the latter's totem is the wagtail, and that a Munyarwanda /Banyarwanda/, Mututsi /Batutsi/, or Muhutu /Bahutu/ may not enter a newly built dwelling before the bird has been over the hut or in its immediate vicinity. /496/

According to popular belief, the Bagessera have the privilege of establishing contact with this bird of good omen. The Blacks request members of this clan to use their special ability to attract the wagtail.

The king calls upon them, as does the least of his subjects. It may be on account of this role played by the Bagessera that the sovereign chooses their villages to spend the night.

Another reason why the monarch prefers to stay among them possibly derives from the regard accorded to the members of this tribe, which is believed to be the oldest in Ruanda. They lent their name to the province called Bugessera, where all Bagessera claim to have originated.

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1. This expression "big hill" is readily understood by the natives, because it serves to designate the spot where a reigning monarch drew his last breath.

sacred groves (2) reserved for royal tombs by custom or tradition.

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2. We owe the reader an explanation of the expression "sacred grove," which will recur frequently. The word "sacred" is taken here in a broad and technical sense to mean that these groves are set aside and closed to laymen, who may not enter them. They are guarded by official watchmen, who see to it that the grounds are properly respected.

The Banyamugogo, who become the temporary masters of the area, have a large hut built and enlist for its construction the services of neighboring people.

There the remains of the sovereign are sheltered and laid upon a grid in the middle of the hut, about 1.50 meters above ground. The members of the corporation keep a fire burning under the grid for several days in order to dry out the corpse and prevent it from putrefying.

The body, which lies on a bed of skins, is constantly moved so that the heat from the fire may reach all its parts. /518/

The keepers of the hut take turns without interruption, day and night, by the fire they must maintain. Meanwhile, no layman may come near the place under penalty of death.

The undertakers keep up their work until, according to popular belief, the corpse gives birth to a leopard, which is at first

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766 only a small worm (1). Then a pit is dug in the same hut. The royal
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1. Permit us to repeat once more that we are putting ourselves in the position of the natives. We are merely repeating their tales and beliefs.

rema'ns are laid at the bottom of the tomb on a new bed of grass covered with precious skins: lion, leopard, and antelope hides.

The body is completely isolated from the ground, which must not soil it. The whole thing is covered with special mats (ibirago by ibisunyu) made of lake reeds. Finally, the pit is filled up (2).

2. When a king named Yuhi ascends the throne, according to another popular belief, the undertakers have to perform another duty toward the deceased king in addition to what has already been said on the subject.

After having been smoked, the completely desiccated body (umwite) is carried to the sacred grove of Muhima, below Kigali. The pall bearers dig at the spot called Nyamvura ("the rain spot"), where there formerly existed an equally sacred spring, and lay the body in the hole for a moment.

This is called "giving the king a drink (guhira)."

Then the body is brought back to the royal cemetery. His

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successor may henceforth rule in peace, and abundance will reign in the realm, for the various formalities on which the prosperity of the land depends have been carried out.

3. Popular Beliefs Concerning the Survival of the King

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825 "The undertakers," the narrator goes on to say, "cannot leave the site of the grave yet.

"They are not permitted to leave it until the end of the mourning period, which lasts at least four months. The above-mentioned worm /519/ 'must' come out of the corpse's right hand after a while. It is immediately picked up by the keepers, who put it in a vessel full of milk.

"When the container becomes too small, the animal is put in a large jar into which milk is poured every day. The worm soon 'sprouts legs'; it will soon change shape. The jar is no longer adequate, and a tub (umuvule) is provided and also filled with milk. The thing becomes a leopard. It is still fed milk until the day when its carnivorous instincts awaken and it begins to use its claws. Then it is given fresh meat. It must be tied, for it has become 'mean' (irakaliha). The animal manages to break its first bonds, woven of banana-tree bark. It is tied with new ficus ropes, which are soon broken in turn.

"In order to chain the beast, a piece of wire (umukwege) is brought from the royal court (ibgami), where messengers keep going incessantly to report on the whole affair.

"The day comes when the wild beast wounds one of its keepers. Another one soon meets with the same fate, and a third dies of his wounds.

"The situation has become intolerable and cannot go on.

"The leopard, anxious to gain its freedom, grows fierce. Finally, permission is given to grant it freedom, thus releasing the Banyamugogo from an impossible task.

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825 "A sensible man," the narrator added as he closed his tale,
"cannot believe in such things. As for myself, I am only repeating
what I have heard around me."

The "sacred groves" often serve as lairs for leopards, who take advantage of the rainy season, when the sorghum has grown tall, to comb the countryside /520/ for prey. Furthermore, the leopard is the totem of the king, who formerly appropriated all leopardskins for his own personal use. Many common people, therefore, believe in these fables. In the capital, where no one is taken in by such childish tales, nothing is done to enlighten the people. The undertakers, who maintain the strictest silence about their own functions, stand only to gain by exaggerating the wondrous aspects of the matter in order to acquire increased importance in the eyes of their fellow men. One can imagine the prestige that surrounds the king, a prestige that is mixed in with a large amount of superstition and that causes him to be revered on a par with a demigod by most of his subjects.

4. Duties and Privileges of the Undertakers

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767 The task of burying or, more accurately, mummifying (gwosa, gwosereza) the sovereign is entrusted as we said to a special corporation known by the name of Banyamugogo, that is to say, "the men with the big (mourning) log," who belong to the Abiru clan. This is the special clan whose members are responsible for preserving the memory of customs and traditions. The royal undertakers have no duties other than the funerary ones and enjoy rare privileges. No chief may attack or pillage them, for they live under the king's protection.

They are not subjected to forced labor, nor do they pay taxes. On the other hand, they are strictly forbidden to come to court and to appear in the presence of the prince. If they have to plead a case before him, they may at best set out on the path to the capital, but they must stop at a good distance from it. There they build a large fire into which they toss fresh cow dung in order to create thick clouds of smoke /521/ and to draw attention upon themselves. Meanwhile they delegate men to present their complaints and grievances.

342 been made, the neighbors are invited. They come and build the hut; the owner is solely concerned with serving the workmen. Some time later the door is built in the same manner.

In most cases the huts last only two or three years and must then be rebuilt.

(764)
● 125 787 After the death of the owner, his widow occupies the hut unless she goes to live with the brother of the deceased. However, the hut is abandoned if an ibis or a crowned crane has settled on it. If the bird of ill omen were a crane, it is pursued, and if at all possible, the house is built on the first spot where the bird settles after it has left the roof of the hut. [205] They do not pursue the ibis. In Mulera the Bahutu as well as the Batutsi are afraid of both birds.

343 251 Let us now turn to a brief discussion of the storehouses (kigega) which are so characteristic of the Ruanda compounds.

In Kiziba where the basic diet consists of the omnipresent banana which cannot be stored, there are no supply houses. The small supplies of beans and millet are wrapped in banana leaves and hung in large bundles on the uprights of the huts. In Kissaka and the rest of Ruanda where the main diet consists of millet flour and peas and where the small supplies of bananas are used chiefly for beer, houses are necessary to store the abundant harvests.

343 285 251 The storehouses are large cylindrical baskets. They consist of a layer of sticks running the length of the basket and held together by a number of hoops made of bundles of sticks. This basket is supported from below by a number of wooden forks stuck into the ground, which grasp the outer hoops of the bottom of the basket.

The walls of the basket are sealed with a mixture of clay and cow dung. Under the basket is laid a pile of ashes as a protection against the eternal ravages of termites.

This large basket, two meters high and one to one and a half meters wide, is closed at the top by a straw lid sewed to a conical lattice of sticks. In Kissaka the storehouse has no door, so the roof lid must be removed when supplies are put in or taken out.

251 Millet is usually stored in the form of clipped ears. Once, however, I saw an unusual instance in Kissaka of unthreshed millet

776 Even though Imana is supposedly the creator, there are no
773 special tales about his relation to the other powerful spirits, for
example, Ryangombe. The Banyaruanda seem to have an altogether vague and indefinite idea of him. The strangest thing is the story of his appearance on earth in the form of a child who was even whiter than kaolin (runoni). The child had supernatural power. Among other things, he changed water into milk. Imana created the first human beings. The first man married his sister, but neither of them had a father or a mother. Imana gave them fire.

Lieutenant Von Parisch (1) listed Lugira, Lulema, and

1. Parisch, F.R. Von, "Zwei Reisen
durch Ruanda 1902 bis 1903," Globus,
Vol. 86 (1904), p. 78.

Kihanga as synonyms for Imana.

The myths about Imana seem to be less known or kept more secret, at least in Kissaka, than the stories about other spirits.

778 [302] Every Mututsi is said to revere a particularly sacred
825 bull in his herd, which has a secret connection with Imana. The
sacred bull of Musinga was allegedly very fierce and attacked many people. It is maintained that those who were attacked by the bull were recognized by the animal as enemies of the king. If they came through alive, they were in former times punished with death. This custom has been given up in the last three or four years, probably as the result of greater contact with Europeans, but the unfortunate ones are still in very bad repute.

778 We must not forget that the vessels containing remnants of
chickens and the fat of sacrificed sheep, which the Batutsi wear around their necks, are also called "Imana."

776 Even more puzzling than Imana are the batabazi in the
773 Ruanda pantheon. I have already mentioned them in the chapter on the history of Ruanda. Father L. Classe told me that the myth of the flood as well as the idea of the sacrifice of an individual life to save mankind appear in the batabazi legends. The people survive the flood in a hut made watertight with earth.

000 which have affected each other, the Batutsi and the Bahutu.

794 The importance of the dog among babandwa merits special
575 attention. I was assured that the dog is the cow, that is, the
● 825 most important and sacred animal, of the babandwa. I was
unable to find out anything more specific about its role in the
cult. The adherents of the theory that the states of central
[177] Africa represent vestiges of Egyptian culture might see in the
relationship of the dog to the cult of the "lord of departed souls"
a reflection of Anubis who had the head of a dog.

794 The babandwa exert their power as medicine men, sacri-
575 ficers, and soothsayers. These three functions are very closely
related to each other and can hardly be separated. Besides the
babandwa and the worshippers of Biheko, the balози [poisoners]
are also said to constitute a secret society.

Initiation. Initiation into a secret society is bound up
with long and complicated ceremonies. There are two categories
of consecrated ones, those who are fully consecrated and those
who have undergone only the preliminary tests.

[308] I should now like to try to give a picture of the
babandwa initiation ceremonies in Ruanda, which are very strictly
kept secret.

The picture, pieced together by means of painstaking ques-
tions, shows a resemblance in the main with the description by
Father Van Thiele of Ussuwi, although the arrangement of the
whole ceremony seems to bring out some differences.

If a person who is to be accepted into the secret society of
babandwa, for example, a sick person, as generally happens,
has been told by the chicken oracle that he can be cured by
initiation, he must bring gifts to the consecrated to make them
favorably disposed toward him.

First of all an influential member is visited, one who might
agree to act as guardian (godfather). The guardian, who is also
called "father," invites the rest of the initiated into the house of
the candidate for initiation.

Certain preparations must be made and a number of objects
assembled before the initiation ceremony can take place. The
candidate provides a sword, a bell, a torch, a large quantity of
beer, and food supplies:

‡ [i.e. secret society members—Analyst]

233 in the villages near their fields; but they had to bring food daily to the place where their husbands were, for even the herdsmen did not live entirely upon milk. Cattle were never kept inside the fences enclosing the dwellings of the king or other owners, but the herdsmen had to bring milk after each milking to the owner of the herd even if the cattle were at some distance.

[422] The men regarded their cows as their own and might sell or exchange them as they thought fit, but the king claimed all the cattle in the country and might take any he wanted from any herd. The value of a cow was twenty goats and of [435] a bull fifteen goats, while a goat was valued at five hoes. A woman who had been captured in war might be restored to [727] her tribe for a payment of three cows for a woman of the better class and six goats for a peasant.

When a cow was thought to be about to calve at an inconvenient time during a journey or while grazing at such a distance that the calf would have to be carried home, the herdsmen tied a little grass round its horns close to the head and this was said to retard the birth. When a cow which had calved did not cast the after-birth, the first milk was placed upon a stool for a time and then poured away. If the cow recovered without parting with the after-birth, the owner might not drink the milk from it but left it to the herdsmen until the cow had another calf and the placenta came away. For fourteen days after a cow calved, the milk was drunk by the herdsmen or by children and not by the owner of the cow.

[784] No taboo was attached to the navel cord of calves.

231 Goats were preferred to sheep, but both were reared in large numbers, not so much for meat as in order to exchange 437 them for cows and other necessary articles. Most men also [651] kept bees, for honey was demanded as a tax by the king and [237] was an article of food among all classes. A large pot of honey with the comb was sold for a goat, and a small pot of refined honey for two hoes.

AGRICULTURE

241 Each wife possessed a plot of land on which she raised crops to supply the family with food. Among the better classes the

112 THE PREMISE OF INEQUALITY IN RUANDA

705 a member of the warriors' section, and a member of the herds-
422 men's section.

The mwami could effectively dispose of the *nyambo* and *mabara*. *Nyambo* were cows which had some marked physical characteristics (as for instance long horns). The mere fact that beasts had such characteristics gave the king exclusive rights of disposal of them whatever may have been the previous rights of other people over them. Many lyrical poems were devoted to the praise of *nyambo* in which they are divided into two 'clans', the brown one (*ibihogo*) and the red-brown (*amagaju*) which were supposed to be in a permanent state of war.¹⁷ A herd of *nyambo* numbered about fifty cows. There were not *nyambo* with every army. *Mabara* were ordinary cows, not fulfilling the *nyambo* qualifications, and of which the mwami had the effective disposal. One or several herds of *nyambo* and *mabara* were entrusted by the king only to certain armies.

The cows over which the army-chief had the rights of effective disposal were also considered, according to ninety-six per cent. of our informants, as army cattle and were tended by the army herdsmen.

Cattle at the effective disposal of each member of the herdsmen's section of the army were also regarded as army cattle. Here we have to distinguish between cattle possessed as a client and cattle not obtained from a lord (ninety-two per cent. of our informants said that one could have cattle which were not received from a lord). The former kind of cattle were linked to the lord's army and not to the client's army although the client had the right of usufruct and of effective disposal (as defined here) over that cattle. The latter kind of cattle was composed of cows obtained by exchange (*impahano*) which were regarded as army cows according to ninety-five per cent. of our informants; of cows given by the prospective husband to his father-in-law (*indogoranyo*) also according to ninety-five per cent.; of cows received as reward for brave conduct in war (*ingororano mu ntambara*) again according to ninety-five per cent.; of cows received as gifts (*inka a'ubuntu*) according to ninety-six per cent. Cows not kept by somebody as a client were called by the generic name of *imbata*, or, according to sixty-two per cent. of our informants, the mwami's cows (*inka a'umwami*), which is confusing.

¹⁷ Kagame, 1947b, p. 793.